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VM - Records Mgmt 6-4
Nat. Storage Co. Inc
50 mi No. Pittsburgh
Pa.

12/18/59

9 November 1959

File

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT : Report on Inspection of Underground Facilities in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

1. This memorandum is designed to inform you of facts which I learned last Friday, 6 November 1959, on my trip to the underground repository of the National Storage Company, Inc. located under the mountains fifty miles north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and to relate this information to potential advantages which we might gain by securing space in the repository.

2. I first learned of this installation from Mr. H. F. Burley, whom I dealt with officially until his recent retirement as Director of the Continuity of Government Division of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization. He is now the Washington representative of the National Storage Company, Inc. of Pittsburgh, owner and operator of the repository, in which space is leased to private business and industrial corporations and to some departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

3. The repository is located in a mine beneath 220 feet of solid limestone, under a mountain fifty miles north of Pittsburgh. Specifically, it is in Cherry Township of Butler County, about 1½ miles from the Village of Boyers, Pennsylvania. The mine was a limestone mine from which billions of tons of industrial limestone (used as a catalyst in the steel-making industry) were mined from about 1912 until 1947, leaving a hollowed-out area equivalent to 80 acres in size, 220 feet underground. This area comprises approximately 3,484,800 square feet of space 14 feet high, making a total of 48,787,200 cubic feet, all of which is useable for underground records storage and relocation site purposes.

4. Since 1956 the National Storage Company, Inc. has developed and leased out 87,120 square feet of the space. Occupants include the United States Patent Office, which has all of its records (over 350,000 patents granted) stored there, the Office of Social Security, the Mellon National Bank of Pittsburgh, the Aluminum Company of America, the Koppers Company, the Westinghouse Electric Company (which maintains all of its records on a live file basis and has eight employees permanently stationed underground in

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the installation in 40,000 square feet of space), and numerous other banks, insurance companies, and other concerns. Included in the Westinghouse records area is a vault containing classified records on contracts with the Atomic Energy Commission, including Restricted Data.

5. The National Storage Company, Inc. develops the space according to the requirements of the occupant. The developing process consists of covering the floor of the space with asphalt having a resilient rubberized surface, installing and maintaining plumbing, lighting, heating, ventilating and cooking facilities, and painting the walls and ceiling. Some of the occupants use their space for vault area storage of records only, while others have their space divided between records storage and emergency relocation facilities. For example, the Koppers Company emergency relocation plan provides for 50 of their key executives and staff members to relocate to their space in the repository and carry on the business of the company in time of enemy attack. For this purpose relocation facilities equal to those provided in the underground installation at High Point have been prepared. These are illustrated in the attachments hereto, which show typical pictures and descriptions of the repository and its facilities.

6. I was impressed by the provisions made for security of the installation. At the portal there is a double-locked steel grilled gate three tons in weight, with 1-inch steel bars set on 4-inch centers. The main guard post is at this point. It is manned 24 hours a day by a uniformed armed guard force, all members of which are former service men qualified and armed with Colt 38-caliber revolvers and blackjacks. They are licensed and enrolled as special police officers and bearers of weapons permits by the Sheriff of Butler County, Pennsylvania. The area of the interior is patrolled by guards using Detex Watch Clock station equipment. Admittance to the repository is restricted to holders of security credential passes bearing the signature of the president of the company. These must be presented when the holder signs in and out on the register at the portal. The Resident Manager, all members of the guard force, and all employees have been issued security clearances through the classification of SECRET by the Security Office of the Inspector of Naval Material of the Department of the Navy for and on behalf of the Departments of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. They also have been accorded "Q" Clearance by the Atomic Energy Commission in view of the fact that the Westinghouse Electric Company, working on classified contracts for the Atomic Energy Commission as was pointed out above in Paragraph 4, stores classified material there. The facility itself has been cleared through SECRET classification by the Navy and approved by the Atomic Energy Commission for the storage of the material in the Westinghouse vault.

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7. The National Storage Company, Inc. has been advised by the Atomic Energy Comission that danger of fallout within the repository is negligible. They stated that by making the portal just outside the steel grilled gate with a plastic folding cover of a type which they had in mind they could exclude even such particles in the atmosphere as might find their way down to the depth of the portal entrance. There is no problem of possible contamination through air brought in through ventilation ducts because there are no ducts. Engineers called in for the purpose have advised the National Storage Company, Inc. that even with all access to the outside world completely sealed off the supply of air in the almost 90,000,000 cubic feet of space in the mine would provide sufficient oxygen to sustain life comfortably for a large number of people over a considerable period of time, without replenishment.

8. One mile back in the mine from the portal, in the area which has not yet been developed for relocation or storage purposes, there is a 10-foot-thick rib of limestone which separates the repository property from the adjoining underground property of the United States Steel Company. This latter property is actually the continuation of the original mine and extends from the repository property line to a portal 1½ miles away on the opposite side of the mountain. On the United States Steel side, in the area contiguous to the portal, they have their own private relocation facility and vault area. Their portal also has a steel gate and is under armed guard. By mutual agreement between the National Storage Company, Inc. and the United States Steel Company there is a steel grilled, double-locked gate consisting of 1-inch steel bars set on 4-inch centers, closing a fifteen-foot aperture on the property line. This arrangement was made, rather than sealing the aperture with masonry, in order to improve ventilation for both parties and in order to insure that each party has access to an escape hatch in the event its own portal is obstructed. I put on a miner's safety helmet and equipment and went back into the mine to this point, accompanied by the President, Mr. L. E. Yost, and the Chief Engineer, Mr. Russell E. Mitchell, where I personally inspected this gate on the property line. They stated that their company would modify this gate to meet our security requirements if we felt that such might be necessary.

9. The ventilation of the repository and, indeed, of the entire mine is excellent. A constant stream of air from outside flows through the portal at an average velocity of seven miles per hour, diffuses itself through the main bores and the laterals, and reaches all recesses. This air is brisk, dry and invigorating, and has just a tinge of the wholesome limestone smell which one associates with limestone filters. There is no seepage or dampness of

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any description in the mine. In the vaulted areas which have been developed for the customers there is ventilating equipment which brings in the heated and humidity-controlled air from the main bores and laterals. Heat is maintained at a constant 70-degree level, and humidity is controlled to 52-55% in accordance with specifications for storage of microfilm and paper records prescribed by the United States Bureau of Standards.

10. At present, communications consist of a 25-circuit telephone cable (5 circuits presently assigned and operable) which runs into the installation. It is serviced by the People's Telephone Company of Butler, Pennsylvania; the switching center is located at Harrisville, ten miles west of the repository, at which point the People's Telephone Company connects with the Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania. Lines of the Western Union Telegraph Company parallel the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad and pass within three miles of the repository.

11. Light and power for the repository are purchased from a main line of the West Penn Power Company, backed up by stand-by Diesel generator facilities and bunkers of fuel oil located on the premises. The water supply is drawn from a well on the premises drilled down into a well-known geological stretum of the area called the Pennsylvania Water Sand. It is bacteria free. It is pumped with equipment on the premises. Sewage is drained into chemical septic tanks, the effluent of which is drawn ultimately into a lateral.

12. The repository is located on a paved side road 3/4 of a mile off Pennsylvania State Route 308. The Pennsylvania Turnpike is 35 miles to the south. Pennsylvania State Route 8, the main highway between Erie (30 miles to the north) and Pittsburgh (50 miles to the south) is five miles to the west. There is a paved air strip owned by the Cooper-Bessemer Company at Grove City, 12 miles northwest. It can handle aircraft up to and including the DC-3. The main line of the Bessemer and Lake Erie Railroad (freight and express only) is three miles to the west, with a branch line to Bayers (known as Annandale on the railroad map) 1½ miles away.

13. There is a municipally-owned hospital of some size at Grove City (12 miles away) and an even larger one in Butler (18 miles away).

14. There is a reproduction plant in the repository which is available for use of the occupants on a rental basis. It consists of a laboratory for printing hard copy from microfilm and a large Xerox Copyflow machine which will produce directly from film, using

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non-photographic materials, 1200 linear feet of paper prints per hour.

15. Access to each area which has been developed and rented out to a tenant is controlled by a 10-inch concrete wall sealing off the bore or lateral, with entrance through a steel bank vault door of the tenant's choosing and combination. This can, if desired, be of a time-lock nature. If necessary, vault areas can be constructed or bored out within the vault areas.

16. The base rate of rental of space in the vault is $1.25 per square foot for a 10-year lease period. This includes developing the area by installing asphalt floor, painting the walls and ceiling, and furnishing heat, light and water, as was stated above in Paragraph 5. The Kiggers Company has 10,000 square feet of space in which they maintain their emergency files, and desks and business machines comparable to what we have [redacted] 25X1 25X1 They pay the base rate. The rate rises according to what special provisions, if any, the tenant was incorporated into his space. At my request Mr. L. A. Yost, President of the company (whom I previously had cleared for the purpose of this contract by our Office of Security), is going to prepare within the next two weeks and submit to me, through Mr. Hurley, a graduated scale of rental costs based on the providing of storage and/or relocation facilities for 100 persons, starting with complete austerity on an interim basis and working up to conditions less austere, for sleeping, eating, washing and working space.

17. I visualize that our leasing space in this underground repository might accomplish any one of the following objectives:

a. It could be used as an alternate emergency relocation site outside the present Relocation Arc to which certain designated persons permanently stationed outside Washington, certain Executive and Specialist Reserviste, and all CIA personnel traveling outside the Washington area at the time of occurrence of any emergency could be directed to report to reconstitute and carry on the functions of the Agency.

b. Certain members of the Headquarters staff associated with any particular function which need not necessarily be carried on in space physically adjacent to that of the other functions of the Agency could be directed to report to the repository as their regular place of relocation instead of the [redacted] 25X1

c. A special Relocation Force representing all elements of the Agency could be developed for deployment

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